

# ***HAVING OUR SAY, REVISITED:***

*Greater Pittsburgh Arts Council's 2018 Arts Community Surveys*

*EXECUTIVE SUMMARY*







## Project Purposes

Every two years, the Greater Pittsburgh Arts Council (GPAC) administers online surveys of artists and arts and culture organization personnel in Greater Pittsburgh. The surveys explore the many challenges, accomplishments, and aspirations of arts and culture community members, as well their views on the fairness of the local arts system, achieving balance in arts and non-arts work, financial health, arts audiences, and optimism about the future. The surveys solicit feedback on the quality and impacts of GPAC programs and services, and thereby help GPAC to plan future program priorities and services that strengthen the area's diverse and vibrant arts sector.

This document presents findings from two surveys administered in Summer 2018, and compares several results with those identified in similar surveys during 2016. Further, GPAC analyzed selected items by sub-categories of race, gender, and age, a practice that, in our 2016 "Having Our Say" report, revealed distinctions of note.

*Full results are available at GPAC's website: [www.pittsburghartscouncil.org/research](http://www.pittsburghartscouncil.org/research)*

## Scope, Summary and Methods

"Having Our Say, Revisited" reports on the results of a GPAC-designed, on-line survey administered in June and July 2018. The questionnaire contained a broad range of items—ratings, rankings, and many open-ended questions for respondents to offer both opinions and recommendations.

We received 373 completed questionnaires—217 from individual artists and 156 from arts & culture organization administrators/board members/supporters.

The Artists survey contained 51 items exploring artists' careers, lives, and aspirations. GPAC's Artist Relations Manager offered detailed advice on the design and content of the Artists survey. The Arts and Culture organization survey contained 38 items and inquired into organizations' challenges, accomplishments, and aspirations.

The surveys were the same as instruments used for the 2016 "Having Our Say" project. This has allowed GPAC to compare results from 2018 with several key findings from 2016. Also, as in 2016, this report aggregated answers to most questions, and also analyzed selected items by sub-categories of race, gender, and age, a practice that revealed notable distinctions in 2016. Finally, in the spirit of "Having Our Say," this executive summary and the full technical report contain numerous direct quotes from members of the area's arts and culture community.

The survey was distributed widely via direct e-mail to GPAC databases, Facebook posts, and communications to participants in GPAC affinity groups—Racial Equity & the Arts, Accessibility Peers, and the Pittsburgh Arts Research Committee, among others. Our goal was to hear from as many respondents as possible, including multiple perspectives from within the same organizations. Respondents were encouraged to "share the survey widely with your friends, colleagues, and associates in the arts & culture community."

*This study was administered and managed by David Pankratz, Research and Policy Director, with the support of Nina Chavez, Master of Arts Management Candidate, Carnegie Mellon University.*





## Highlights from the Artists Survey

### **Who Responded?**

Of the **217 artists** who completed surveys, compared to 187 in 2016, large majorities are independent artists and/or teaching artists, though many other roles are represented. Over 60% of respondents are visual artists, while we heard from many performing and literary artists as well.

Most respondents are long-time Pittsburghers, while transplants are here for artistic opportunities, jobs, partners/significant others, and the low cost of living. 78% consider Greater Pittsburgh a great region for the arts, in contrast to 80% in 2016, and 87% feel welcome here. While one artist said, “It’s not a welcoming city for Black people and other people of color,” ratings by Black and White respondents overall were similar on these measures.

45% of responding artists are GPAC members, 55% are not. **50% of members cite GPAC’s new free membership for artists as an incentive for their joining GPAC**, while most non-members said they were unaware of member benefits or that GPAC membership was free for artists.

### **Making a Living/Funding Artistic Work**

60% of responding artists are self-taught, compared to 70% in 2016, while majorities have received formal training as well—59% (undergraduate) and 47% (graduate training).

**Individual artists are able to make a living here drawing on diverse sources of income**, with 41% relying on teaching income, 36% working full-time, and 35% working part-time, often in multiple jobs. This resourcefulness comes at a cost, however, by cutting into artists’ time and energy to make art. As a result, 63% of respondents

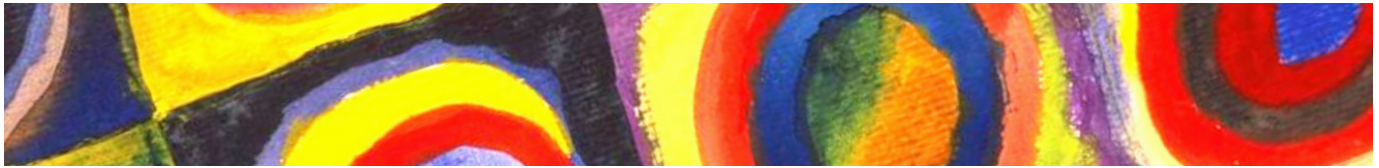
said they were either dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with their work/life balance (that figure was 51% in 2016). As one artist said, “it seems to take all my time just to make a living.” Older artists are much more likely to be satisfied or very satisfied on this measure.

As for **satisfaction with their overall financial situation**, 71% of Black respondents are either somewhat or very dissatisfied with their finances. In contrast, 41% of White respondents say the same.

All artists, as they also revealed in 2016, face challenges—securing grants, marketing, managing finances, finding work/exhibition/performance spaces, engaging the community, and a lack of critical feedback. Further, **55% see arts funding here as inequitable compared to 77% in 2016**, and gaps remain between Black and White respondents.

63% of Artists find the local arts community to be supportive, though far fewer Black respondents agreed. Also, “cliquish” was a common claim about the local arts community. Said one artist, “Overall, Pittsburgh seems friendly, but if you are new and don’t know many members of the arts community, I think the barriers to entry can be difficult.”

Despite these challenges, responding artists referenced multiple ways they’re able to **fund their artistic work**: self-funding, artist fees/contracts, patrons/donors, grants, family, residencies, and crowd-sourcing, leading to a range of accomplishments, such as commissions, productions of new plays, founding of a small arts organization, a crowd-funded book, and establishment of a studio space for artists.



Overall, **74% of artists are optimistic about their futures here**, including both White (77%) and Black respondents (70%). The ratings were lower in 2016 and the gap between White and Black respondents was larger (63% to 53%).

### **Artists and GPAC**

95% of respondents said they are glad GPAC exists, and 59% ranked GPAC overall as excellent or good (20% had no opinion). 49% rated interactions with GPAC staff as excellent or good (while 42% had no opinion).

Large majorities of artists noted GPAC's information resources, advocacy, artist support systems, and advancement of artist connections as particularly valuable.

Specific GPAC programs for artists rated most highly:

- Small project and career grants
- Grant application assistance
- The new Network of Arts Administrators of Color
- Technical assistance for public art projects,
- Conversations/actions to advance equity and inclusion for artists
- Volunteer Lawyers/Business Volunteers for the Arts, the Pittsburgh Artist Registry
- One-on-one consulting with GPAC staff
- Professional development workshops for artists.

Programs of interest include grants for artistic creation, performance/exhibition opportunities, collaborations to create new work, and a campaign encouraging area residents to buy locally-produced art.

### **Future Issues**

An important question asked artists to identify core issues of special importance to the future of artists in Greater Pittsburgh.

In rank order, these are:

- Audience development and engagement
- Funding
- Equity and inclusion, accessibility
- Work/live space for artists

*Of note, equity and inclusion were more highly rated than in 2016.*

Finally, artists offered suggestions for actions GPAC and the arts community might take:

- "It's partly our job as artists to work towards a more equitable and just future."
- "Advocating for independent artists so that businesses and non-profit organizations can better understand how to connect with independent artists would be a great service."
- "GPAC might try hosting a dreaming session to develop ideas or the future of the arts in Greater Pittsburgh."



## Highlights from The Arts and Culture Organizations Survey

### **Who Responded?**

Of the **156 respondents** in 2018 from arts and culture organizations, compared to 179 in 2016, majorities are either **executive directors or board members**, though a broad spectrum of roles were represented. Organizational types cited, in order, are performing groups, arts education, galleries and museums, and performance facilities, among others. **49% of respondents' organizations have existed for more than 30 years.**

As for organizational **budget size**, the two largest cohorts are \$10 million+ and less than \$25,000. Similarly, regarding numbers of paid employees, most common responses were either 30+ or None.

96% of respondents said Greater Pittsburgh is a **great region for the arts** in contrast to 85% in 2016, and 96% say they feel welcome here. As in 2016, White respondents said "Yes" they feel welcome here in 2018 at higher rates than do Black respondents. One arts administrator stated: "I feel welcome personally, but not necessarily what my organization represents ethnically and culturally."

**70% of survey respondents are GPAC members**, and 30% are not. Reasons cited for being a GPAC organizational member were networking, supporting the local arts community, making partnerships/connections, information resources, supporting advocacy efforts, and professional development opportunities. **Non-members** cited costs as barriers to GPAC membership, as well as uncertainty about the benefits of organizational membership.

### **Challenges and Accomplishments of Arts and Culture Organizations**

Arts and culture organizations indicate they **face a number of significant challenges** listed here in rank order:

- Increasing equity/diversity/inclusion
- Contributed and earned income
- Individual giving and major gifts
- Long-term sustainability
- Organizational capacity

Challenges in equity and inclusion and long-term sustainability were rated higher in 2018 than in 2016, whereas challenges in earned income, incorporating new technologies, and organizational capacity were rated lower in 2018. Respondents also offered ideas on how GPAC might help them with these challenges:

- professional development and forums to work on diversity training and staff/board diversity
- cross-promotion opportunities with community organizations
- advocacy for institutional donors to support human capital and investments in people

Despite the challenges they face, **majorities** (53%) of arts and culture organizations either **met or exceeded their income projections** in 2018, though 23% did not know. Further, 51% of responding organizations **met or exceeded their annual audience projections.**

Respondents also referenced a broad range of recent organizational accomplishments: increased attendance and donations, staffing up, meeting ambitious membership goals, a full season of productions, a new artistic director hire, demonstrated economic impact, a successful





“Give Big Pittsburgh” campaign, a marked increase in sensory-friendly performance, and more website visits.

Organizations are also establishing arts and non-arts partnerships, creating equity/inclusion/diversity policies, designating accessibility coordinators, utilizing SMU DataArts tools, and advocating for the sector. 2018 saw increased activities in these areas in comparison with those found in 2016.

### **Arts and Culture Organizations, the Arts and Culture Community, and Greater Pittsburgh Arts Council**

96% of organizational respondents, across all demographic categories, say the area’s arts and culture community is better off because GPAC exists. 68% ranked their overall experience with GPAC as excellent or good, and 69% rated interactions with GPAC staff as excellent or good (while 22% had no opinion). These ratings, too, were high across demographic categories.

In contrast to individual artists, organizations find the arts and culture community more supportive and collaborative than cliquish. However, differences by race are notable. White respondents rated several features highly—supportive (54%), collaborative (46%), and vibrant (42%), but Black respondents offered lower ratings to supportive (25%) and collaborative (25%) measures.

*Note: these 2018 differences replicated those found in 2016.*

Respondents **value many GPAC offerings**—programs to advance equity, diversity, inclusion, and accessibility, grants, professional development, research reports, advocacy, and legal assistance.

**Among new GPAC programs respondents hope to see are new initiatives in equity, diversity, inclusion, and accessibility (at even higher rates than in 2016)**, succession planning and the preparation of young arts leaders, bridges between communities, individual giving, artistic collaborations, and audience development.

### **Future Issues**

A final question asked arts organization representatives to identify core issues of special importance to the future of the arts in Greater Pittsburgh. In rank order, these are:

- Equity and inclusion
- Audience development and engagement
- Leadership training/succession planning
- Funding
- Accessibility
- Individual giving
- Collaborations and partnerships
- Visibility
- Geographic reach

As with artists, equity and inclusion were more highly ranked in 2018 than in 2016.

Finally, respondents offered a number of suggestions for actions GPAC and the arts community might take on these and related issues:

- “In this era where ethnic minorities are denigrated, arts organizations have a responsibility to show how important ethnic diversity is to the health of our country.”
- “I think GPAC’s equity in the arts report is a great example of follow-through and follow-up re: equity and inclusion. But I think there is more room for follow-up.”
- “We need to grow the overall arts audience in Pittsburgh. We need our organizations to professionalize and embrace new ways of doing things to accomplish these and other goals.”
- “The importance of strategic partnerships cannot be overstated. GPAC can highlight outstanding projects, partnerships, and achievements as examples to replicate.”
- “It is essential that we reach beyond our sector and region to increase the awareness of the cultural amenities of Greater Pittsburgh.”
- “Leadership and audience development are particularly important. Without them we will have no skilled leaders ready to take on the complex issues of leading our organizations and there will be no one in the community who finds us relevant or valuable.”

Greater Pittsburgh Art Council's mission is to expand the reach and impact of the region's diverse and vibrant arts and culture community by providing leadership, advocacy, capacity building, and connections.

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